

Patterns of women's educational policy in Islamic countries: a comparison of Malaysia and Saudi Arabia educational system

Abstract

Education has been a major concern in all Islamic countries especially in Saudi Arabia and Malaysia. The level and pattern of female's participation in educational institutions very considerably among and within the various countries. The immediate and long-term educational strategies for both countries are very much influenced by their national development policies, particularly the countries' economics and social policies. Public education starting from elementary schools up to secondary school in the two countries is provided free by the government. Islam does not stop women from getting their educations up to the highest level. The development of women's education in these two Islamic countries has been shaped by many factors. The factors associated with the development of women's education in the two countries are religious beliefs, indigenous traditions of each country, historical events, socioeconomic level of family, and political ideology. An analysis of Saudi Arabia and Malaysia's women educational patterns will provide an understanding of the similarities and difference in practice in the two countries where the majority of the population is Muslim. It will also show how the people believe what Islam should be. Both countries have their own rich cultural traditions and Islamic heritage that to some extent have influenced the educational system and other spheres of lives of the population.